Pocket Guide to Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim and Charleston Jewish History

Congregation Founded 1749
Religious School Founded 1838
Present Sanctuary Built 1840

A National Historic Landmark of the United States
The Oldest Synagogue in Continuous Use in the United States
Founding Reform Jewish Congregation in the United States

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KKBEB
Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim
Beginnings

The story of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (KKBE) is one of faith, devotion, and perseverance in the American tradition of freedom of worship.

Charleston was established in 1670; the earliest known reference to a Jew in the English settlement was in 1695. Soon other Jews followed, attracted by the civil and religious liberty of South Carolina. By 1749, these pioneers were sufficiently numerous to organize our congregation, Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (Holy Congregation House of God). Fifteen years later, they also established the now historic Coming Street Cemetery, the South’s oldest remaining Jewish burial site.

At first congregants worshipped in private homes; in 1780 they used an improvised synagogue adjacent to the present temple grounds. In 1794 they dedicated a new synagogue building described then as the largest in the United States, “spacious and elegant.” This handsome, cupolated Georgian synagogue was destroyed in the great Charleston fire of 1838 and replaced in 1840 on the same Hasell Street site by the present imposing structure. The colonnaded temple, dedicated in early 1841, is renowned as one of the country’s finest examples of Greek Revival architecture. Our KKBE sanctuary is today the second oldest synagogue building in the United States and the oldest in continuous use. It was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1980.

In 1790 President George Washington responded to the congratulations of K.K. Beth Elohim by writing,

“The affectionate expressions of your address again excite my gratitude, and receive my warm-est acknowledgement... May the same temporal and eternal blessing which you implore for me, rest up-on your Congregation...”
Birthplace of Reform

Charleston is acknowledged as the birthplace of Reform Judaism in the United States. In 1824, forty-seven KKBE congregants petitioned the Adjunta (the trustees) of the synagogue to change the Sephardic Orthodox liturgy. The petition, seeking a briefer Hebrew ritual, English translation of prayers, and a sermon in English, was denied. The disappointed liberal members thereupon resigned from the congregation and organized “The Reformed Society of Israelites.” This was only fourteen years after the first Reform Jewish congregation was started in Germany in 1810. The Society was influenced by ideas of Jewish Reform and the atmosphere of religious freedom in America. It lasted only nine years, but many of its innovations have become part of today’s Reform Judaism. The progressives rejoined the old congregation and persuaded a majority of the congregation to install an organ when the present Temple was built in 1840. This was the first time in America that a synagogue introduced instrumental music into its worship. Since then, KKBE has been connected with religious reform. In 1873, KKBE was one of the founding synagogues of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, now known as the Union for Reform Judaism.

The first formal organization of women in Beth Elohim was The Society for the Religious Instruction of Jewish Youth in 1841. A similar women’s group was organized in rival congregation Shearit Israel in 1844 called, Society for the Instruction of the Jewish Doctrine. In 1866, after the War, when Beth Elohim and Shearit Israel rejoined, The Hebrew Ladies Sewing Society, organized for charitable deeds absorbed the functions of the other two groups. In 1900 it became The Ladies Auxiliary Guild. The National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods were officially formed in 1913. Soon after, our Sisterhood affiliated with NFTS, today’s Women of Reform Judaism.

Leadership

For more than two and a half centuries members of Beth Elohim have been eminent leaders in the city, state and country. Notable early congregants included Moses Lindo, who, before the Revolution, helped to develop the cultivation of indigo (then South Carolina’s second crop), and Joseph Levy, veteran of the Cherokee War of 1760-1761 and probably the first Jewish military officer in America. Almost two dozen men of Beth Elohim served in the War of Independence, among them the brilliant young Francis Salvador, who, as delegate to the South Carolina Provincial Congresses of 1775 and 1776, was the first Jew to serve in an American Legislature. Killed shortly after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Salvador was also the first Jew known to die in the Revolutionary War (see page 8 for more details).

Members of the congregation founded Charleston’s Hebrew Benevolent Society in 1784, the nation’s oldest Jewish charitable organization, and in 1801 established the Hebrew Orphan Society, also the country’s oldest. Both are still active. A Hebrew school, where secular as well as religious subjects were taught, functioned from the middle of the eighteenth century.
In 1838 the second oldest Jewish Sunday School in the United States was organized by Sally Lopez. The famous poet, Penina Moise, was an early superintendent and teacher.

Other congregants pioneered in steamship navigation, introduced illuminating gas to American cities, and numbered four of the eleven founders of the country’s Supreme Council of Scottish Rite Masonry.

Our Campus

The Sanctuary: The current building was constructed in 1840-41 by member David Lopez from the architectural design by Tappan and Noble and the work plans of Cyrus L. Warner. The temple grounds are fronted by a graceful iron fence dating from 1819. The large marble tablet above the huge entrance doors proclaim the Sh’ma (Deut. 6:4) in Hebrew, and in the foyer in a similar position are four of the fourteen original dedication stones of the 1794 sanctuary.

The impressive Ark is made of Santo Domingo mahogany. By local tradition, the Ark doors are kept open throughout worship services. Within the Ark, handsome glass doors provide a barrier to the four Torah scrolls. The current pews were installed in 1879 when the Bimah was moved from the center of the room to its current place in front of the Ark. Although women moved from the balconies to join the men on the main floor for worship services in 1879, the balconies remained until they were destroyed during the Great Earthquake of 1886. Stained glass windows, which feature Jewish religious symbols, date from after 1886 and are replacements of plain glass windows destroyed in the earthquake.

Pearlstine Family Building: After the original synagogue building was destroyed in the 1838 fire, a “temporary structure,” known as the Tabernacle, was hurriedly erected. This structure was replaced 111 years later, in 1950, when the congregation celebrated its 200th anniversary. In conjunction with KKBE’s 250th anniversary, the Tabernacle underwent additional major expansion and renovation, completed in 2003. The building is now known as the Pearlstine Family Building. Both the late Milton Pearlstine and his nephew, Edwin Pearlstine, Jr., served the congregation as presidents and have provided major, lasting congregational, communal and civic leadership. The Pearlstine Family Building now houses the Berlinsky Lobby, the Chosen Treasures Judaica Shop, the Religious School classrooms, Barbara Pearlstine Social Hall, administrative offices, the Yaschik Library,
the Freudenberg Board Room and Chapel, the Museum and the kitchen.

**The Heyman Building:** The reconditioned and expanded 18th century residence to the rear of the sanctuary contains the Kronsberg Youth Lounge, the Doris L. Meddin Activity Room and supplemental classrooms. This was also renovated in 2003.

**A Holocaust Memorial,** dedicated in 1992, is located at the east end of the Baker Walkway of Life which holds the Patla Memorial Fountain. The Carmel Ann Goodstein Memorial Fountain lies just inside the main wrought iron gate. The Honor Garden is behind the Berlinsky Lobby and pays tribute to those who came before us and celebrates happy occasions on its Chai Wall.

**The Coming Street Cemetery:** America’s oldest colonial Jewish cemetery is located at 189 Coming Street. (The cemetery is opened only by special request.) Current burials are in the Huguenin Avenue Cemetery. *(see page 10 for more information)*

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**The Art in Barbara Pearlstine Hall**

The previous social hall was renovated in 2003 as part of the facility-wide improvement project and dedicated to the memory of Barbara Pearlstine by her daughters and grandchildren.

The two large murals on either side of the hall were painted by the well-known Charleston artist William Halsey, son of the late congregant Eleanor Loeb Halsey. As one enters the hall, the mural on the right depicts "The Founding of Beth Elohim." The building and flames shown in the left part of the mural represent the fire destroying the 1794 synagogue. On the right side of the mural one sees the present temple. One six-branched menorah, representing KKBE’s early orthodox status and one seven-branched menorah, representing reform, are shown. The hands outstretched with divided fingers is the traditional way in which the priestly benediction is given.
The mural on the north wall, on the left, depicts “The Patriots of Beth Elohim.” The figure on the horse represents the young Revolutionary patriot and legislator, Francis Salvador, who was killed and scalped by Tory-led Indians. He was one of more than twenty Beth Elohim congregants who fought in the American Revolution, symbolized by the standing figure holding a Bible who represents Abraham Alexander, a Revolutionary officer and religious leader of Beth Elohim between 1764 and 1784. The soldier seated with the broken sword and bowed head represents some 180 Jewish South Carolinians who served in the Civil War. The tablet with rampant lions and flames represent the brave Maccabees who fought for religious freedom in the second century BCE. The soldier and the flag on the left represent KKBE members who served in subsequent wars.

The two striking pieces of steel sculpture on the rear wall were made by another of our well-known local artists, the late Willard Hirsch, a member of KKBE. “The Prophet of Consolation” is on the left and “The Prophet of Admonition” is to the right.

Photos by Warren Lieb
Francis Salvador
Martyr of the American Revolution

An American Jew most readily connected with the American Revolution is Haym Solomon. Another early Jewish American deserving to be better known is Francis Salvador. He was the first identified Jew to be elected to an American legislative body and the first to die for the cause of American liberty.

Born in 1747 in London, Francis Salvador was the well-educated son of an aristocratic Sephardic family whose original name was Jessurun Rodrigues. (The Marrano name of Salvador (savior) was assumed as a response to the Inquisition in Portugal.) The family eventually migrated to England by way of Amsterdam and prospered in their mercantile enterprises. Wealthy by virtue of an inheritance, Francis married his cousin Sarah, the daughter of his uncle Joseph Salvador, who at one time was a director of the powerful East India Company and a president of the Portuguese congregation in London.

Salvador came to South Carolina in 1773, leaving his wife and four children in England, intending to bring them later. He came both to help his father-in-law Joseph, who had suffered severe financial losses but still owned about 200,000 acres of land in what is now Greenwood County, and also to rebuild his own fortune. Francis acquired 7,000 acres from his father-in-law and established a plantation known as “Corn Acres” on Coronaca Creek.

In 1774, as South Carolinians began serious efforts to gain independence from Great Britain, Salvador joined the revolutionaries, convinced of the justice of their cause. Impressed by his education, polish and commitment, his neighbors elected him as a representative of the Ninety-sixth District to the First Provisional Congress of South Carolina.

Salvador's name appears frequently in the official records of the First and Second Provisional Congresses. He served on numerous committees concerned with creating a working administrative structure and providing for the defense of the area. The journals show that he influenced several colleagues, including John Rutledge, William Henry Drayton, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, and Edward Rutledge—all destined to play important roles in South Carolina’s future. One of his last acts in the Second Provisional Congress was to help with the final draft of a new constitution, which created the independent state of South Carolina. Salvador became a member of the new General Assembly.
When the General Assembly adjourned in April 1776, Salvador returned to his up-country plantation. For several months he was deeply involved in trying to deter British sympathizers (Tories) from inciting the Cherokee Indians to attack patriot settlements on the frontier. But the efforts of Salvador and others to neutralize the Tories and their Indian allies were not successful.

In July 1776, as was feared, the Cherokees and their Tory compatriots began pillaging and massacring. On one occasion Salvador rode over 28 miles in a countryside infested with Indians and Tories to alert the militia. (For this, he has been referred to as a Jewish Paul Revere.) He then joined the militia in a campaign to halt their enemies. During a Cherokee ambush on August 1, 1776, Salvador was shot three times and was scalped before his companions found him. The militia commander later reported, “When I came up to him, he asked whether I had beat the enemy. I told him yes; he said he was glad of it and shook me by the hand, and bade me farewell and said he would die in a few minutes.”

His fellow patriot Henry Laurens wrote that Salvador’s death was “universally regretted” and William Henry Drayton, later chief justice of South Carolina, noted that Salvador had “sacrificed his life in the service of his adopted country.” In Washington Park in Charleston a memorial to Francis Salvador bears this inscription:

Born an aristocrat, he became a democrat;  
An Englishman, he cast his lot with America;  
True to his ancient faith, he gave his life  
For new hopes of human liberty and understanding.

Salvador died fighting on the frontier without learning of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence—words in which he deeply believed.
Coming Street Cemetery

The Coming Street Cemetery is the oldest and largest colonial Jewish cemetery in the South. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Here are the graves of Revolutionary soldiers, as well as those of many distinguished Charleston families. When this site was first used as a cemetery, it was outside the then city limits at Boundary Street, now Calhoun Street.

The cemetery contains over 800 souls; many graves are not marked. It was purchased by Beth Elohim from Isaac DaCosta in 1764. The oldest identifiable grave is that of Moses D. Cohen, the first ritual leader of Beth Elohim, who died in 1762.

The Coming Street Cemetery is a significant resource for Jews and non-Jews from all over the United States looking for ancestors or studying early American Jewish history.

Among those buried here are:

- Twelve members who fought in the American Revolution
- Eight soldiers of the War of 1812
- Two soldiers from the Seminole Wars in Florida
- Twenty-three Civil War participants, of whom eight died in the Confederate Cause
- Six rabbis of the congregation
- Eighteen past presidents of the congregation
- Four of the eleven founders of the Supreme Council of Scottish Rite Masonry in 1801
- Several cenotaph monuments created to some who are buried elsewhere
The cemetery has three sections:

**Section A:** From 1754 it was the DaCosta family burial ground, and from 1764 was the original congregational cemetery;

**Section B:** This part was developed by former members of Beth Elohim who had seceded in 1841 over the installation of an organ in the synagogue and established orthodox Congregation Shearit Israel. When the two congregations merged after the Civil War, a dividing wall was taken down;

**Section C:** The Lopez family plot was established in 1843 when Shearit Israel refused burial to David Lopez’s first wife who had not been converted to Judaism.

The Historic Coming Street Cemetery Restoration Fund has been established to restore and maintain this historic treasure.

**Huguenin Avenue Cemetery**

The congregation’s present burial ground was established in 1887 and it is located south of Magnolia Cemetery on the banks of the Cooper River. Buried here are members of many prominent Charleston Jewish families, including Rabbi Jacob Raisin who served the longest term as KKBE’s religious leader—31 years and Rabbi William A. Rosenthal who served our congregation both as Rabbi and Rabbi Emeritus for a total of 29 years.

The Huguenin Avenue Cemetery also contains graves and stones removed from Shearit Israel’s old cemetery at Rikersville (1857-1887) and stones from the old DaCosta and Harby Cemeteries which once were on Hanover Street.

The DaCosta Cemetery was active from 1780 until 1939 and was established by Sephardim who had seceded from Beth Elohim and formed Beth Elohim Unveh Shalom (1780-1790). The Harby Cemetery was active from 1798 until 1939.
1749—Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim established, fourth Jewish congregation in the United States; chartered in 1791; located on Hasell (pronounced Hazel) Street since 1775; present building since 1840 (now a National Historic Landmark), second oldest Jewish house of worship in the U.S. and the oldest in continuous use; Coming Street Cemetery since 1764 and Huguenin Avenue Cemetery since 1887.

1782-1790—Congregation Beth Elohim Unveh Shalom formed by dissidents from Beth Elohim; worshipped on Beresford St., now Fulton; rejoined Beth Elohim; cemetery on Hanover St. about 1782 (no longer in existence).

1824-1833—Reformed Society of Israelites formed by dissidents from Beth Elohim, the first attempt at reform in Judaism in the U. S.; worshipped in Seyle’s Masonic Hall, about a block south of Hasell St.; most eventually rejoined Beth Elohim.

1840-1866—Congregation Shearit Israel established by traditionalists who seceded from Beth Elohim over the installation of the organ and other reforms; built synagogue on Wentworth St., east of Meeting St. in 1847; cemeteries on Coming St. and Rikersville; amalgamated with Beth Elohim in 1866. Wentworth synagogue no longer exists.

1855-1954—Congregation Berith Shalome (now Brith Sholom) organized by Polish and Prussian Jews, one of the oldest Ashkenazi congregations in the South; worshipped on St. Philip St. south of Calhoun; dedicated synagogue building in 1874 (no longer exists); cemetery at Magnolia and Lemon Streets from 1856; cemetery on Sycamore Ave. in West of the Ashley (Maryville), from 1887.

1911-1954—Congregation Beth Israel organized by seceders from Brith Sholom; worshipped on St. Philip St. south of Morris St., then in a new building at 192 Rutledge Ave. south of Morris St.; cemetery is on Pine and Lemon streets.

1947—Congregation Emanu El formed by seceders from Brith Sholom whose petition for conservative services had been rejected; worshipped on Gordon St. until 1977, then from 1979 at new synagogue on Windsor Dr., west of the Ashley River; cemetery on Sycamore Ave., west of the Ashley (Maryville).
1954—Brith Sholom and Beth Israel congregations merged to form Congregation Brith Sholom Beth Israel; worships at the synagogue on Rutledge Ave.; operated Addlestone Hebrew Academy now located at the Jewish Community Center on Wallenberg Blvd.; and maintains a minyan house on Lord Ashley Dr., South Windermere.

2012 - Congregation Dor Tikvah (Generation of Hope) is a new, vibrant, and growing modern orthodox congregation located in the West Ashley suburbs, which welcomes and is open to all Jews regardless of their affiliation. Congregation Dor Tikvah currently meets at the Charleston Jewish Community Center campus, which is within the eruv, and maintains kosher kitchen facilities.
Brith Sholom Beth Israel  
(Orthodox)  
182 Rutledge Ave.  

Brith Sholom Cemetery  
Magnolia and Lemon Streets  

Beth Israel Cemetery  
Pine and Lemon Streets  
Established in 1911  

Brith Sholom Beth Israel Cemetery  
Sycamore Ave., West Ashley  

Congregation Dor Tikvah  
(Modern Orthodox)  
1645 Wallenberg Blvd., West Ashley  

Synagogue Emanu-El  
(Conservative)  
5 Windsor Place, West Ashley  

Emanuel-El Cemetery  
Sycamore Ave., West Ashley  

Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim  
(Reform)  
90 Hasell Street  

KKBE Coming St Cemetery  
Coming St.  

KKBE Huguenin Ave. Cemetery  
Huguenin Ave  

Jewish Community Center,  
1645 Wallenberg Blvd.  
Founded in 1944, present building occupied in 1966. Successor to a YMHA which operated in the 1870’s and 1880’s and a Jewish Community Center which existed from 1922 to 1933 on George St. From 1944 to 1966 it was located on land near the College of Charleston. It houses the Charleston Jewish Federation, Jewish Social Services, Congregation Dor Tikvah, Young Adult Division (YAD) and the Addlestone Hebrew Academy. The Sherman House for the low-income elderly is located on its property. Leon Banov Health Center Building, 334 Calhoun St. is named for a member of Beth Elohim, Dr. Leon Banov, Sr. (1888-1971), who for many years was the chief health officer of Charleston County. He was responsible for introducing the pasteurization of milk in this area. A nationally renowned public health official.  

Baruch Auditorium of the Medical University of South Carolina, Calhoun St. opposite Gadsden St. Named after Simon Baruch, MD, a surgeon in the Confederate Army, a president of the S. C. Medical Society, a chairman of the S. C. Board of Health, a pioneer in the development of the surgery for appendicitis and in physiological therapeutics. Father of philanthropist and presidential advisor, Bernard Baruch, who made a large contribution to the then S. C. Medical College, part of which was used to construct the auditorium in 1941.  

Kronsberg Wing, Roper Hospital, Calhoun Street. Named in honor of Edward Kronsberg, a prominent businessman and civic leader, who for 25 years served on the hospital’s board of commissioners. A portrait and plaque in the wing commemorates his contributions to the hospital.
Charleston Holocaust Memorial, on Marion Square between King and Meeting Streets, was dedicated in April 1999 in the name of the Holocaust survivors who live and have lived in South Carolina.

254 King St. Constructed c. 1838 by Moses Levy, who also built 311 E. Bay St. The building is on the site once occupied by Jacob Tobias, where the Sephardic congregation Beth Elohim Unveh Sholom began in the 1780’s. For many years it was occupied by the M. H. Lazarus Hardware Co.

S.W. Corner King and Wentworth Streets. Occupied in latter 19th and early 20th century by J. L. David and Bro., dealers in men’s clothing. The NW and SE corners were also occupied by Jewish merchants. Several large clothing and department stores were operated in the two blocks south of this corner: Triest and Cohen; Louis Cohen & Co.; Charles Elias & Co.; Kohn, Furchgott, & Benedict; Hirsch, Israel & Co.

11 Fulton St. Built c. 1852 by Grace Peixotto, who operated a brothel here until 1880; she was the daughter of Solomon Cohen Peixotto, chazan at KKBE.


229-233 King St. Built by Rachel Florence Lazarus c. 1839. She was a “sole trader” (a woman permitted by law to do business separate from female subscriber to the Hebrew her husband). She was the only Harmonic Society, which provided the funds to install the historic organ in Beth Elohim’s synagogue in 1841.

245-247 King St. Built c. 1838 by Nathan Hart; modified in the 20th century; once occupied by S. H. Kress and Co. and Silver’s “five and dime” store.

NE Corner Archdale and Clifford Streets. One time home of Abraham Ottolengui, KKBE president 1840-1850 at the time of the “organ controversy;” established the Ottolengui Charity Fund.

44-45 Queen St. Double apartment built 1796-1802 for Abraham Sasportas, a native of France and a merchant; served as an agent for the French privateers who brought prizes of war to Charleston (England and France were at war.)

N.W. Corner of King and Broad Streets. 106 Broad St. The Lining House, constructed c. 1715, said to be the oldest frame structure in Charleston; used by Dr. Jacob de La Motta as “Apothecaries Hall” between 1829 and 1845. Much of his paraphernalia and equipment is on exhibit at the Charleston Museum.

N.E. Corner King and Broad Streets. Built c. 1768; store occupied over 100 years by Berlin clothing; building much modified.
85 King St. Built c. 1844 by Marx Cohen, a prosperous planter; his son Marx E. Cohen was killed during the Civil War a month before it ended.

19 East Battery. Built in 1923 for Julius M. Visanska (1865-1933), son-in-law of David Bentschner and partner. Mrs. Visanska’s name appears among the Women of the Year on a plaque in the City Hall. J. M. Visanska was a president of the Hebrew Orphan Society.

69 Meeting St. Built c. 1800, this house was home of M. C. Mordecai from 1834 to c. 1860; prominent merchant and importer; owned a vessel which was used for blockade running during the Civil War. One time president of KKBE, a City Alderman, a State Representative, a State Senator. After the Civil War his vessel, free of charge, transported Confederate dead to Charleston for burial; a founder of the newspaper, The Southern Standard, which opposed secession.

97 Broad St. Built c. 1835; once owned by Mordecai Cohen (1763-1848), a Polish Jew who rose from the peddling trade to become the second richest man in S.C. A philanthropist, he was honored by the Charleston Orphan House Commission with a marble tablet that was erected there. It is said that when Lafayette visited Charleston, the gold plate used at the banquet in his honor was borrowed from Cohen.

119 Broad St. This handsome building was once owned by Mordecai Cohen (see 97 Broad St.), merchant, real estate speculator, and banker. Lost his fortune in the great fire in 1838. Marble façade added by a later owner; now owned by the Catholic Church.

Salvador Memorial, City Hall Park, Meeting St. between Broad and Chalmers Streets. Erected in 1950 to the memory of Francis Salvador, first Jew to be elected by his peers to a legislative body in America and the first Jew to die in the American Revolution.

Charleston City Hall, northeast corner of Broad and Meeting streets. On the first floor of this historic building is a plaque honoring Saul Alexander, an immigrant Jew (1884-1952), for his philanthropies; on the second floor is a plaque honoring Charleston Women of the Year, which contains the names of ten Charleston Jews.

Hebrew Orphan Society Bldg., 88 Broad St. Built in 1820’s for a bank; purchased by the Society in 1836, the oldest chartered Jewish charitable group in the U.S. (1801). First president was David Lopez. Building was frequently used by gentiles as well as other Jewish organizations. Only for a short while did the building house orphans. Sold in 1932. The Society is still in existence. (Note the identifying stone in Hebrew between the second and third stories of the building).
11 Broad St.  Constructed in 1856 by David Lopez, builder of Beth Elohim’s 1840 synagogue. During the Civil War, he served as General Superintendent of State Works for S.C. He established the Lopez family burial site which is now a part of the Coming Street Cemetery.

141 East Bay St.  Built prior to the Civil War, originally the Farmers and Exchange Bank, for which David Lopez, builder of Beth Elohim’s 1840 synagogue, was prime contractor. Lopez also built several important buildings no longer extant: Browning and Lehman Department Store (later the Academy of Music), Institute Hall (where the Ordinance of Secession was signed and the National Democratic Convention was held in 1860).

Dock Street Theater, S.W. corner Church and Queen Sts.  Built within the interior of the Old Planters Hotel, which was given to the City of Charleston in the 1930’s, prior to restoration, by Milton A. Pearlstine, a Beth Elohim president, a successful wholesaler, and long-time member of the S.C. Ports Authority. On site of the first building in America designed solely for theatrical use (1736).


64 Hasell St.  At the time of the 1886 earthquake, this building was occupied by the B. D. Lazarus family, which traced its ancestry to one of the founders of KKBE; KKBE Vice-President during the Civil War; led merger with Shearit Israel in 1866.

18-20 Wentworth St.  A double residence built by David Lopez c. 1839.

301 East Bay St.  Built c. 1816 for Moses C. Levy, wealthy merchant; one of four Jews who were among the founders of the Supreme Council of Scottish Rite Masonry. He is said to have rushed into the synagogue to retrieve a Torah during the fire of 1838. He died at 90. His granddaughters, Phoebe Yates Pember and Eugenie Phillips, were famous for their deeds in the Civil War.

72 George St.  Originally #1 College St.; turned 90 degrees to make way for the College of Charleston’s Physicians Auditorium; 1840-1860 home of Abraham Moise II, an original member of the Reformed Society of Israelites, an attorney and prominent member of KKBE; brother of Penina Moise, poet, composer of hymns and KKBE Religious School Superintendent, who lived with his family for a number of years prior to the Civil War. Her name also appears on the Women of the Year plaque in City Hall.

313 King St.  Constructed c. 1812. Renovated by Jack Krawcheck, an ardent preservationist, and occupied by Jack Krawcheck’s Mens’ Clothing Store for many decades of the 20th century.
N.E. Corner King and Mary Sts.  
Built between 1852 and 1872; occupied by Bluestein clothiers since 1913; blue bricks were used in façade to identify the owners; building much modified.

438 King St. Victorian Italianate building erected by Harris Livingstain in 1908 for his building supply store and family quarters.

500-502 King St. Built by Isaac and Nathan Jacob c. 1885; most imposing store in that area at the time (note name in the pediment); active members of Brith Sholom. This block and others on both sides became the center of business started by Russian and Polish immigrants 1890-1925.

Grace Episcopal Church, 190 Wentworth Street. In the SW corner of the sanctuary is a stained-glass window dedicated to benevolent women, one of whom is Henrietta Szold, the founder of Hadassah.

123 Coming St. Built c. 1840 for Jacob N. Cardozo, editor and publisher of The Southern Patriot (1816-1845) and publisher of The Evening News (1845-1850); a recognized authority on banking, commercial statistics, and political economy.

138 Wentworth St. Built c. 1840. Abraham Tobias, prominent merchant, paid $10,000 for it in 1843, sold it in 1850, repurchased it in 1851; it was sold by his estate in 1859.

5 Pitt St. Built c. 1830; was occupied for much of the 20th century by the Pollitzer family; Gustavus Pollitzer was a commission merchant and a member of the school board; daughters Anita, Carrie and Mabel were ardent women suffragettes; Anita became a national officer in the movement; Carrie fought for admission of women to the College of Charleston and free kindergartens; Mabel was involved in many civic improvement activities, especially conservation. The names of Carrie and Mabel Pollitzer appear on the Women of the Year plaque in City Hall.

73 Rutledge Avenue Built in 1856; bought by Isaac L. Hirsch, clothier, in 1893, who modified it into a Second Empire structure. Occupied by the Triest family 1913-1959.


12 Bull St. Once owned by David Bentschner (1852-1900), a prominent King St. merchant; Bentschner and Visanska was a men’s clothing store at the S.E. corner of King and Hasell Sts. (Note initials DB on gate of house.)
43 Bull St. Built c. 1850, residence of the Judge Joseph Fromberg family from 1946 to 1961. He was an active politician and B'nei Brith. He was a founder, with Maier Triest, of Charleston Chapter of A.Z.A.

Avery Research Center, 125 Bull Street. This is a renovation of Avery Normal Institute, constructed in 1867, to educate and train African-Americans as teachers. Its first principals were Thomas and Francis L. Cardozo, sons of Isaac N. Cardozo, who was a member of Beth Elohim.

NW Corner of King & Morris Sts., built in 1949, once the flagship store of Edward’s Variety Stores, a chain of about 35 outlets in SC and GA founded by Edward Kronsberg in 1926.

Nathan & Marlene Addlestone Library of the College of Charleston, southwest corner of Calhoun and Coming Sts., dedicated in 2005. Nathan Addlestone (1913-2001) was a highly successful dealer in used steel products and a major community benefactor. Housed at this library is the historical collection of the Jews of South Carolina under the direction of Dr. Dale Rosengarten.

Sylvia Vlosky Yaschik Jewish Studies Center of the College of Charleston, northeast corner of Wentworth & Glebe Sts., dedicated in 2003. Henry (1909-2000) and Sylvia (1915-2000) Yaschik were the first sponsors of the Jewish Studies program and were contributors to many community causes. Today, College of Charleston Jewish Studies has a Jewish Studies Major, its first.

100 Tradd Street. Built c. 1736; once the home and school of Isaac Harby, dramatist, editor, critic, who was the prime organizer of the Reformed Society of Israelites (1824-1833), the first attempt at Jewish Worship Reform in the United States.

Sam Rittenberg Blvd., Hwy. 7; Rittenberg (1867-1932) was a prominent attorney and South Carolina legislator who was responsible for the state compulsory school attendance law.

William Ackerman Lane, South Windermere subdivision, of which he was the prime developer. He was a prominent attorney and generous civic leader; Ackerman Playground on Sycamore Ave., West Ashley, is also named for him.

Addlestone Street, in the Wagener Terrace neighborhood on the Charleston Peninsula; Sam Addlestone (d. 1960) a successful grocer who established one of the first supermarkets in Charleston, was a long-time City Alderman.

Sabin Street, Medical University of South Carolina Campus at Calhoun St., named for Albert Sabin, MD, developer of the Polio Sugar Cube Vaccine, served on the faculty.
Prints, posters, postcards, and other souvenir items relating to the history of Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim are available in the Sisterhood gift shop—Chosen Treasures.

Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim

Senior Rabbi, Stephanie M. Alexander
Assistant Rabbi, Andrew H. Terkel
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